SAN PLACIDO MARTYR

St. Placido Religious Society

Who is Saint Placido

Preacher, confessor, monk and disciple of St. Benedict, St. Placido served his fellow man in the sixth century by preaching the word of the Lord. Barbarians martyred him for his fervent religious beliefs.

This peaceful saint counseled many people and healed them morally and spiritually.

What is the story of St. Placido's life? Placido's father, Tertullo, committed his boy to the care and sanctity of St. Benedict.

One day at the monastery known as Subiaco, Placido was sent to get a jug of water. When he pulled the jug, he fell into the lake, and the current pulled him in the middle.

St. Benedict, who was in the monastery, miraculously knew of the accident. He called to one of the brethren, Mauro, "Brother, run! Make haste! The child has fallen into the water."

Mauro ran to the lake and walked on the water to where young Placido was struggling. Mauro grabbed Placido by the hair, and pulled him to solid ground.

St. Benedict, the master of the monastery, grew to love Placido as one of his dearest disciples. In his zeal to expand his mission to other lands, St. Benedict set his sights in Sicily. It is believed that he took Placido with him to another monastery at Monte Cassino, a place said to have been given to St. Benedict by Tertullo.

The monastery at Monte Cassino, and another at Terracina, were the centers of life for St. Benedict and his disciples. Many devoted their lives to studies and to the healing of souls. Placido was one of them.

Placido went to Sicily and founded the monastery of St. John the Baptist at Messina. Some years later, a fleet of Saracen pirates, led by Mamuca, descended on Sicily. When Placido and his followers would not worship their pagan gods, they were persecuted, and fire was set to the monastery.

Placido became the first martyr of the Benedictine order.

His body is preserved today and placed in St. John di Malta Church in Messina, Sicily. The church calendar lists his feast day as Oct. 5

In celebration of Saint Placido

St. Placido became the patron saint for residents in the mountain town of Castel di Lucio, located in the Messina province of Sicily. Every year in August the townpeople rekindle their devotion to the saint with an assortment of religious and civic festivities: Masses, processions, music and games. The five-day feast remains a highlight of the year. Even those who have left Castel come home to the St. Placido celebration.

In the early 20th Century, many of the Sicilian and Italian citizens took a bold step in their lives: They emigrated to the Americas. Many settled in New York, and some moved to New Jersey. Most, however, eventually came to Easton, Pa. Others moved to Cordoba, Argentina.

But regardless of where the immigrants eventually decided to live, they brought with them a love of St. Placido. The love is robust today.

In 1917, the newly settled residents in Easton formed a "Mutual Soccorso Society" of St.Placido. They established a rule that all volunteer natives of Castel di Lucio could become members of this society. Now the group, known as the "Circolo San Placido," is open to any Catholic.

The first procession in Easton was in 1919. It has continued every year and has attracted local Italian-Americans, relatives and friends from as far away as New York and New Jersey.

The ceremony occurs during the four days preceding the first Monday in September. The faithful celebrate the "Triduum" or three days of Masses and prayer to prepare for the celebration.

A carnival on Friday and Saturday nights features Italian food, games and music.

On Sunday, members carry banners and a huge float, or "bara," with a large statue of St. Placido in a procession through the streets of South Side Easton.

The float, built in 1977, is heavy. The handlers struggle, but their burden symbolizes the unity that makes the celebration of St. Placido worth while.

In 1982, St. Placido followers rejoiced when they received a relic of the saint. The relic is present in all religious services.

VIVA SAN PLACIDO!

Prayer to Saint Placido

O Glorious St. Placido,
Valiant martyr of Jesus Christ
and patron of Castel di Lucio.
We have recourse to your
powerful intercession. With
grateful hearts, we acknowledge
your constant readiness to come to
the aid of your faithful followers.

May the faith for which you
willingly and generously
sacrificed your life produce
in our lives those good works
for the Lord which will merit for
us a share of your heavenly crown.

AMEN

Feast of St. Placido celebrated on
the first Sunday in September
in St. Mary Chapel
St. Anthony R.C. Church
Easton, Pa.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
OF ST. PLACIDO
EASTON, PA.